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Secretary of Commerce Approves Disaster Declarations for American Fishing Communities

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced his determination that commercial fishery failures occurred for multiple fisheries between 2017 and 2019 in Alaska, California, Georgia, and South Carolina, while further finding that a catastrophic regional fishery disaster occurred for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama due to extreme flooding events in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Fishing is the cornerstone of countless coastal economies and has been a way of life for generations of Americans," said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. "This determination acknowledges the critical role fisheries play in our communities, and the risks they face from natural disasters and other causes beyond their control."

Fisheries help power coastal economies, providing jobs for fishermen, fish processors, and other maritime industries. However, these key resources can also be vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and other circumstances beyond the control of fishermen and fishery managers that can cause sudden and unexpected losses, leading to devastating impacts to businesses and the surrounding communities.

These determinations make these fisheries eligible for NOAA fisheries disaster assistance. For fiscal year 2019, Congress appropriated \$165 million for fishery disasters. The Department of Commerce is determining the appropriate allocations of these funds to eligible fisheries.